

MID-CENTURY ARCHITECTURE

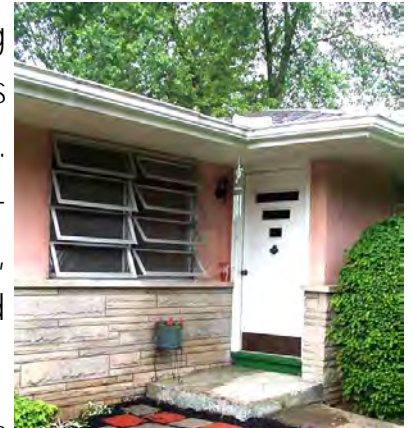
ALUMINUM Postwar budgets and advanced engineering and construction methods allowed for the use of this wonder material with a high strength-to-weight ratio. Plate glass windows and doors were trimmed in aluminum. Through the electrochemical process of anodizing, protective and decorative coatings were added. Gold anodized aluminum was often used in sun grilles.

BOXED WINDOWS After World War II, Art Deco eyebrows were elongated into both horizontal and vertical decorative elements, often framing compositions of windows and slump brick panels. The boxes, or frames, were frequently flared or tapered for an aerodynamic effect.

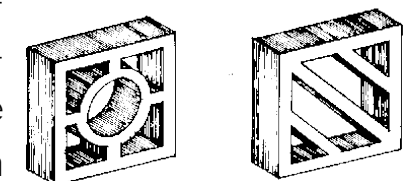
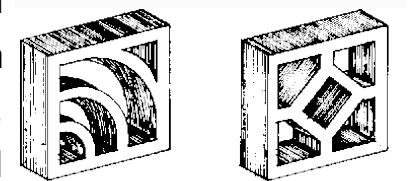
BRISE-SOLEILS A fixed or movable device, such as fins or louvers, designed to block the direct entrance of sun rays into a building. Le Corbusier was the first to design these louvered screens as an integral part of a building, not only for climate control, but also to give depth and richness to the normally flat surface of the typical modern façade. The pattern of vertical and horizontal compartments creates a different set of rhythms from those produced by the alternation of wall and window which the brise-soleil conceals. They are typically executed in masonry, metal, and even wood.

BUILT-IN PLANTERS In Prairie houses, Frank Lloyd Wright often employed successively smaller planters at the bases of exterior walls and corners to anchor the structure to the landscape and create a gradation from the architectural to the natural.

CANTED WINDOWS Extending beyond the typical Modernist use of glass, post-war architects often tilted glass walls outward from the base, usually seen in motel lobbies, storefronts, gas stations, and fast-food restaurants.



CORNER WINDOW GROUPING SURROUNDED BY A WINDOW



CANTILEVER A beam or other projection that is unsupported at its projecting end. Cantilevering shows off structural innovation and contributes to asymmetrical design. In the International Style, cantilevering made possible projecting canopies and balconies, also called tray balconies. Shallow masonry cantilevers, evolved from eyebrows.

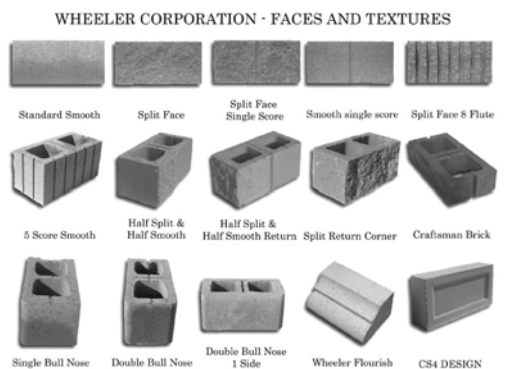
CLERESTORIES Narrow window bands set close to the roofline that let in natural light and emphasize airy structural compositions. Clerestories were a common feature in Wrightian residences and were also adopted by Mid-Century architects for their Modernist appeal.

EXPOSED CONCRETE In keeping with the Modernist tenet of the exterior expression of structure and materials, exposed concrete was used extensively by Le Corbusier, Oscar Niemeyer, and Marcel Breuer.

EYEBROWS Cantilevered sunshades over individual windows and doors of the 1930s Art Deco evolved into continuous, horizontal cantilevers and vertical elements of varying depths.

FLOATING STAIRCASES Flights of stairs without risers or sideboards, often cantilevered from a wall so that the treads seem to float without support, embody the space-age aspirations of the era and can be found in modern residences to offices.

INTERSECTING PLANES The mastery of man over materials was celebrated with masonry, stone, and glass planes that magically seemed to intersect and interpenetrate, in canopies that penetrate glass lobby walls and entire façade compositions.



PILOTIS Another adaptation of the International Style, cylindrical concrete support columns that raised building masses above open ground levels and created areas of shade often used for parking.



POPULUXE A term coined by the architectural critic Thomas Hline, referring to the flamboyant decorative style of the 1950s and 1960s, which employed bright colors and futuristic contours to impart a sense of luxury to mass-produced consumer items from appliances and cars to resorts.

PORTE COCHERE The driveway drop-off area becomes a dramatic ornamental device. In some hotel and even condominium exteriors, elaborate, fanciful porte cocheres were the only break from otherwise purely Modernist designs.



SHED ROOFS Wright brought the long, sloping shed roof, a feature of what Vincent Scully identified as the Shingle Style, back into the American mainstream with his design for Taliesin West. The shed roof became shorthand for modern American domesticity and can be found in countless houses and motels.

SLUMP BRICK Synthetic slumped brick was a ubiquitous decorative material. The inexpensive concrete product came in a range of sizes, textures, and colors. Brick imagery balanced Modernism with a sense of tradition and domesticity.



MID-CENTURY DESIGN ADAPTATIONS

- Eliminating basements and building directly on concrete slab foundations
- Centralizing plumbing
- Eliminating second stories and staircases
- Using minimal decoration
- Creating an open floor plan to maximize space
- Creating a combination living/dining room that opens onto the kitchen
- Minimizing hallways
- Using large windows and patio doors to connect the house to the outdoors in order to make small houses feel more spacious

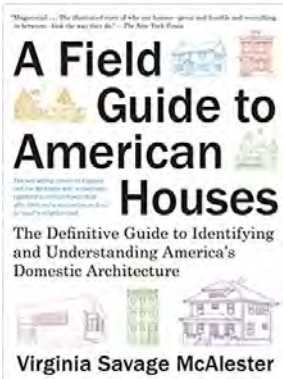
MID-CENTURY HOUSING TRENDS

- Kitchen becomes central feature of home
- Incorporate automobile into home
- Flexible spaces
- Layout was open and casual, with wood paneling instead of wallpaper, and room dividers instead of interior walls
- Informal design to promote a relaxed, easy lifestyle
- Increasing emphasis on outdoor living space including backyards and patios
- New materials promoted for affordability, ease of installation, and reduced maintenance

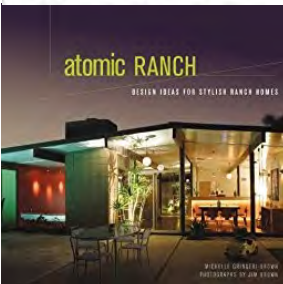
MID-CENTURY DESIGN GUIDELINES

- Denver, Colorado: <https://historicdenver.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/Pattern-book-draft-FINAL-reduced.pdf>
- Thornton, Colorado: https://www.cityofthornton.net/government/citydevelopment/planning/Documents/other-documents/Pattern%20Book_1_10_edits_color%2023-FINAL-REV.pdf
- Miami Beach, Florida: <http://www.mimoonthebeach.com/>
- Glenbrook, Houston, Texas: http://www.glenbrookvalley.org/Glenbrook_Valley/Home.html
- Killeen, Texas: www.killeentexas.gov/files/Historic-District-Design-Guidelines--March-2009-.pdf
- Southfield, Michigan: www.cityofsouthfield.com/Portals/0/docs/Planning/Design_Guidelines_6-Mar-12.pdf

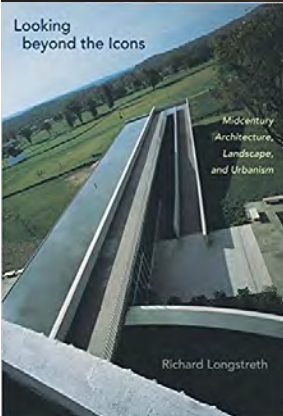
READING LIST



A Field Guide to American Houses by: Virginia Savage McAlester



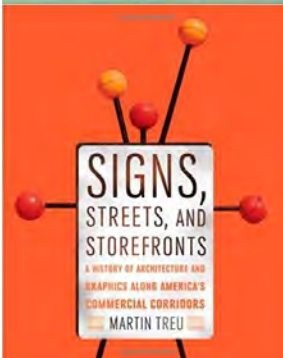
Atomic Ranch by: Jim Brown



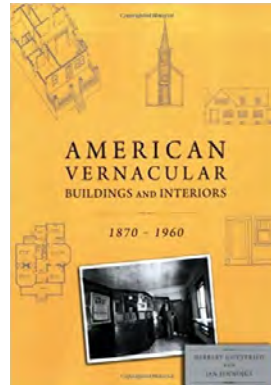
Looking Beyond the Icons: Mid-century Architecture, Landscape, and Urbanism by: Richard Longstreth



Shop America: Mid-Century Storefront Design by: Steven Heller



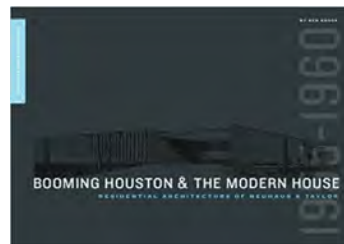
Signs, Streets, and Storefronts: A History of Architecture and Graphics along America's Commercial Corridors by: Martin Treu



American Vernacular: Buildings and Interiors 1870-1960 by: Herbert Gottfried



The Elements of Style by : Stephen Calloway



Booming Houston & the Modern House by: Ben Koush



Ranch House Style by: Katherine Ann Samon



The Sarasota School of Architecture 1940-1966 by: John Howey